

Florida's Senate race, Michigan's school bailout, and Arizona's pro-gun bills: US state blog roundup for 7 – 13 May

USAPP Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson**, looks at the week in US state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

In New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [says](#) that the state's US Senator, Jeanne Shaheen has shown her "fascist side", after the Democrat attacked the GOP presidential nominee over his comments arguing for the minimum wage to be scrapped. They write that Shaheen's comments fly in the face of employees' liberty to make a private contract between themselves and their employer.

Meanwhile in Rhode Island, *RI Future* [writes](#) that legislative leaders have agreed to begin the process to restore the state Ethics Commission's oversight of the General Assembly. The state's Supreme Court effectively suspended the Ethics Commission seven years ago; the new bill before the Assembly would undo this.



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio Credit: Kevin Case (Creative Commons BY)

On Thursday, New York's *Capitol Confidential* also talks ethics, [reporting](#) that soon after former State Senate GOP leader, Dean Skelos was sentenced to five years in prison on corruption charges, the US Attorney for the Southern District of the Empire State put out a statement which specifically mentioned Governor Andrew Cuomo's shut down of the Moreland Commission on Public Corruption. They comment that Cuomo's meddling with and mothballing of the Commission has been the "rockiest chapter" of his term in office. Staying in New York *State of Politics* [says](#) that the state's legislative leaders have insisted that the current corruption investigations into Governor Cuomo and New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio's offices won't derail the remainder of the legislative session. They comment that even without the ongoing investigations, lawmakers are likely to have to deal with growing calls for ethics and campaign reforms following Dean Skelos' sentencing.

Heading over to New Jersey, *PolitickerNJ* [reports](#) that a bill from state Senate President Steve Sweeney, which would increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour, will go to the Senate Labor Committee. Sweeney has

stated that if Governor Chris Christie vetoes the bill, he will seek to put the wage increase to the voters as a ballot question via constitutional channels. Staying in the Garden State, *Save Jersey* [covers](#) the state's Route 35 project, which they describe as being \$76 million over budget and over a year behind schedule. They comment that the \$341 million project (for 12.5 miles of road), is an example of the institutional corruption in the state's transportation system.

South

In North Carolina this week *NC Capitol Connection* [writes](#) that the state is locked in battle with the Feds, after Governor Pat McCrory filed a declaratory judgment action asking for clarification on federal laws relating to the letter sent to the state from the Department of Justice the previous week which states that the state's transgender bathroom measure was in violation of anti-discrimination laws. They say that the Obama administration has also filed a lawsuit against the state over the HB2 bill, referring to it as "state-sponsored discrimination".



South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley Credit: South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley

Heading south, *FITS News* [argues](#) that South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley's planned veto of the state's farm bill was the right move given that bill is a \$40 million "bailout" for one industry affected by flooding at the expense of others which were similarly hurt.

Moving on, *Better Georgia* [writes](#) Friday that the state's Department of Driver Services has been targeting immigrants with pending legal statuses since 2015, with the aim of denying them licenses, despite the fact that they have already proven that they are lawfully in the state. The measure is now the subject of a lawsuit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Centre.

Continuing South, *Shark Tank* [reckons](#) that the Sunshine State has a Senate seat up for grabs. The open seat, being vacated by Republican (and failed presidential nominee) Marco Rubio will see Democratic Representative Patrick Murphy up against one of five potential GOP candidates. They say that only Representatives David Jolly and Ron DeSantis stand a chance of beating Murphy.

In Alabama this week, *Yellowhammer* [gives](#) us everything we need to know about the drag queen who is trying to topple the state's Chief Justice. They say that the state's Supreme Court Chief Justice, Roy Moore faces a very vocal opponent (on account of his opposition to same-sex marriage) in the form of drag queen, Ambrosia Starling who recently led an anti-Moore rally.

Arkansas Blog [writes](#) Wednesday that the state has been allowed by the state's Court of Appeals to seize nearly

\$20,000 from an innocent man, on account that the motion rejecting an appeal vacate the forfeiture in the court was filed too late.

Midwest

On Wednesday, Ohio's *Plunderbund* [ponders](#) the puzzle of the state's junior US Senator – Rob Portman. They say that the Republican is more emotional every day about his potential need to endorse Donald Trump. They say that the situation is tricky for Portman given how energized state Democrats are over his challenger, former Governor, Ted Strickland.

Heading up to Michigan, *RightMi* [says](#) that the state House sent another lifeline to the state's beleaguered public school district. They oppose the bailout, and argue that the state government should shut down the state's failing public school systems, as it has done before. Staying in Michigan, *Eclecta blog* [writes](#) that it's time to stop pretending that state Republicans care about small government or local control. They give examples which include banning local regulations which prohibit the use of plastic bags, and the aforementioned House bills to save the state's schools, which will actually cause them to run out of money before the next school session in the fall.

Moving on to Indiana, *Indy Politics* [comments](#) that the state's GOP Governor, Mike Pence is ready to fight for a second term, despite some first-term controversies over social issues.

Wisconsin's *The Political Environment* has the [news](#) that the administration of GOP Governor, Scott Walker has "blown off" and delayed a \$101 million state debt payment.

Leavenworth St [has](#) Nebraska's "final, unofficial" primary results Wednesday, including state District and US House level races.

West and Pacific

On Tuesday, *Colorado Peak Politics* [reports](#) that the state's Republican Party has filed a lawsuit in federal court to find out who sent a #NeverTrump tweet following the recent state convention. They comment that the damage from this "pseudo controversy" has already hurt the party, and whoever sent the tweet needs to "man up and accept the consequences".



Credit: Mark Mathosian (Flickr, CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0)

Moving on, *Blog for Arizona* [says](#) that the gun lobby has gotten nearly all it wanted following a veto by Governor Doug Ducey of a gun bill which would have tied the state to the decisions of others relating to firearms transfers. He also signed two bills which were aimed at strengthening Second Amendment rights in the state.

In the Golden State this week, *CalBuzz* [looks](#) at how Donald Trump's position on the top of the ticket in November

might help to flip some of the state's current GOP-held congressional districts to the Democrats. They profile at least two US House Representatives who have a large number of Latino voters in their districts, and could find being lumped with Trump to be problematic. Stating in California, *Fox & Hounds* [says](#) that despite the recent success of Elon Musk's hyperloop test, the state is still likely to need a high-speed rail link. Both forms of transportation will be useful given the state's burgeoning population. *Flashreport*, meanwhile [wonders](#) how Congressman Ami Bera could not be aware of the 130 contributions from his family and friends which were illegally reimbursed by his father during his 2010 and 2012 US House campaigns.

Heading out to Hawaii, *Honolulu Civil Beat* [looks](#) at the new political parties getting their shot on Aloha State ballots this year.

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Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USAPP– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.

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